

REASONS *humbly offered to the Consideration of*
the High Court of Parliament against the Exportation of
Wool, Tarn, &c. out of England and Ireland, into
Foreign Parts.

THe Indirect Practices of some Persons to enforce a belief of a publick advantage by the Exportation of Wool into Foreign parts, occasions this to be humbly offered to the several Members of this High Court, seriously to consider the Reasons alledged against them, and to prevent any favourable opinion such a destructive proceeding to the King and Kingdom might receive.

For though the Exportation of Wool hath in former times been allow'd, when our *English* Manufacture was not brought to that height and perfection that now it is, yet it does not consequently follow, that there should be no restraint to it in succeeding times, when a considerable part of the Nation have made it their business to apply themselves to the management of that Affair. Experience hath made out the consequence of that Exportation to be injurious to the Kingdoms Interest, so that the Supreme Authority of the Nation hath been convinced of the necessity of Enacting those several Statutes, which are now in force against it. The Question is not, what was fit to be done in former times, but what is necessary now, according to the present State of the Kingdom; for what was adjudged unnecessary in former Ages, may be of Superlative use in this: Therefore soon after his Majesties Restauration, strict Laws were made to Prohibit the Exportation of Wool, and the grounds were (as by the following Preamble of the said Act may appear.)

XII CAROLI Secundi Regis. Cap. 32.

An Act for prohibiting the Exportation of Wool, Wool-fells, Fullers-Earth, or any kind of Scouring Earth.

For the better preventing and avoiding of such losses and inconveniences as have happened, and daily do and may happen to the Kingdom of England, and Dominion of Wales, and to the Kingdom of Ireland, by and through the secret and subtil Exportation and Transportation, and by and through the secret and subtil carrying and conveying away of Wooll, Wool-fells, Mortlings, Shorlings, Tarn made of Wool, Wool Flocks, Fullers Earth, and Fulling-Clay out of and from the Kingdoms and Dominion aforesaid, and for the better setting on work the poor people and Inhabitants of the Kingdoms and Dominion aforesaid. And to the intent that the full and best use and benefit of the principal Native Commodities of the same Kingdoms and Dominion, may come, redound, and be unto, and amongst the Subjects and Inhabitants of the same, and not unto, or amongst the Subjects and Inhabitants of any Foreign Realms or States, as the same now of late in some great measure hath done, and is further likely to do, if some severer punishment than heretofore be not speedily inflicted upon such Offenders, as shall be Actors or Assistants in, and to such Exportation and Transportation, and in and to such carrying and conveying away thereof as aforesaid.

Now since these Reasons are at this time in force, and of the same validity, as when the Act was first made, then to give liberty for the Exportation of Wool, &c. will be to act contrary to the Interest of the whole Nation.

If it be alledged that there is a Superfluity of Wool that cannot be vended, for want of a quick vent of Cloth, and therefore necessary to be Exported. The Answer to that is natural and apparent, Exportation of Wool is the grand cause thereof, it having been made appear, that by means of one Pack of *English* and *Irish* Wool Transported beyond the Seas, our Neighbouring Nations have improved a double, if not a treble proportion of their own, which would otherwise have been of little use unto them; for they cannot have Wool

so good and cheap any where else, nor carry on that Manufacture effectually without our *English* and *Irish* Wool; therefore it is contrary to the Interest of the Nation to dispose of it upon any terms or pretences, how specious soever they may seem.

If a Liberty be granted for Exportation of Wool, and a considerable Duty imposed upon it, whereby it may amount to a greater Rate to Foreigners than His Majesties own Subjects, This will renew their old Artifice of Clandestine Transportation to save the charge of the Duty, considering that their excuse will be more plausible, their advantage more considerable, and hazard, less: They will assuredly be no more conscientious in the payment of His Majesties Imposts than obeying his Laws, which prohibited the Exportation, though upon a severe penalty. If the Impost be great, it will gratifie them for the Risque they run to save the payment thereof; if little, it will be easily ballanced by the advantages our Neighbours have over us in cheap Diet, and Labour.

And although it hath been affirmed, that a limited Exportation of Wool would increase His Majesties Customs, and raise the price of Lands, &c. it's humbly conceived the effects of that would prove directly contrary; for the Customs are not comparatively raised from the Export, but Import, which must proportionably fall, as the quantity of our Manufacture fails of Exportation: The Customs upon the Manufacture Exported, and the Materials used in making thereof Imported, do amount to more than in reason will be thought fit to be imposed upon Wool, besides the Customs of those vast quantities of other Goods, which are brought in by reason of our Exported Manufactures, would in great part be lost to His Majesty; for though it be allow'd that the Exported Wool would bring in some such Goods, yet a Pack of Wool unwrought at Ten Pounds, cannot bring in so much as the same Pack Manufactured, which will be at treble the value, and if the Kingdom lose Twenty Pounds by every Pack of Wool exported, (as is beyond all controversy demonstrable) it is conceived that no Man can have reason to maintain His Majesty will be a gainer thereby: And if an Exportation be allow'd for some Months, it will be the same thing as if there were no Prohibition at all; for those Foreigners who shall have liberty to Buy and Export at certain times; will not want Agents among the Manufacturers themselves, to engross the Wool against the times of allowance; by which means the whole Trade of the Kingdom will be lost, and the multitude of Families which depend thereupon, be constrained to resort to those parts where the Wool is to be Manufactured, the consequence whereof will be the impoverishing and unpeopling of the Kingdom.

There is now at present a sufficient number of Manufacturers in the Kingdom, and multitudes of Poor and indigent Persons, who are ready to starve for want of Employment: It is therefore humbly conceived, that it is the present Interest of the Kingdom to endeavour by all possible means to keep our Wool and the Manufacturing thereof to our selves, considering how sad and deplorable a thing it will be, if at this juncture of time, when the *French* King, and other Neighbouring Princes and States, are endeavouring by all manner of intrigues and imaginable contrivances, besides vast expences, to erect, and encrease the Woollen Manufacture in their Dominions, which without the use of our Wool they can never perfectly accomplish, we our selves should contrive a way to bring their design to perfection, by delivering that inestimable Jewel into their hands, and consequently divesting our selves of the propriety thereof, which we above all Nations have the sole reason to lay claim to.

Our Ancestors were in former Ages very studious and industrious to improve our Woollen Manufactures, whereby we may plainly see the necessity of its encouragement, and shall it (after so much care used by them to bring it to our doors) be by us neglected? Shall their wisdom that judged this Manufacture and Trade, (and that not without great reason) the grand Support and Glory of our Nation, be called in Question? And shall we suffer our selves to be thus defeated of it, when we are as well able to defend and maintain it as they, and by experience find it the chiefest Manufacture, and Support of the Strength, Honour, and Wealth of our *English* Nation.

The principal and first Reason of the present abatement of the price of Wool, is the *French* King's extream Impositions upon our Manufacture, which is twice doubled since His Majesties most happy Restauration, in so much that several sorts of Cloth pay from Twenty five Pounds to Fifty Pounds *per Cent.* whereby is prevented the Exportation to His Dominions in value above Four hundred thousand Pounds Sterling *per Annum*, and the Exportation of our Wool gives the occasion of this high Imposition, thereby to encourage his own Manufacture, and considerably to encrease his Revenue.

Another Reason is his incursion into *Germany*, and the *Netherlands*, to which places were Shipp'd off heretofore from the Port of *London*, Ninety thousand Clothes Annually, and for these Five years last past not above Twenty thousand *per Annum*.

The third Reason is the not wearing, and otherwise using of our own Wool, or the Cloth made thereof both by our selves at home, and the People in our several Plantations abroad, which is another cause of the great abatement of the price of Wool.

And

And here it is worth the observation to consider, what encouragement His Majesties good Example was this last Summer to the *English* Manufacture by his wearing of It, whereby the Market of *Blackwel-Hall* for mixed Clothes, was improved to a greater height than it had been for many years precedent.

Moreover, what tends to the furthering the Consumption of Wool, conduceth evidently to the advancement of its price, which brings to mind that Act of Parliament made some years since, for the Burying in Woollen; and he that will but peruse it, may be very well satisfied, that the Parliament was sufficiently sensible of the great loss we were in all probability like to sustain, if some way or other were not found out to consume our Wool.

Let us therefore examin and probably conjecture upon that examination, how much Wool might have been Buried since that Act of Parliament was first made and published, without any disparagement to the deceased, or their surviving Friends, and then it will manifestly appear, that a great part of the Wool that is now in this Kingdom, had by this time been under Ground.

Further you may observe, that in *London* there are Buried one year with another (when there is no Plague nor Epidemick Distemper) about Twenty thousand Persons, which (as some judicious Men have remarked) bears a seventh part in proportion with the whole Kingdom.

Now suppose that there dye in *England* One hundred and forty thousand yearly, and allow three Pounds of Wool for a Shroud one with another, which amounts to Four hundred and twenty thousand Pounds of Wool yearly Buried, so that in Ten years we shall spend by this means Forty and two hundred thousand Pounds of Wool, a good proportion of One years growth, with this considerable advantage to our Poor, that it is first made into Cloth.

Now had that Act of Parliament been duly observ'd (as it was our Interest so to do) it is plainly obvious to any discerning Person, what quantity of Wool had by this time been consumed in our Kingdom of *England*, and about Threescore thousand Pounds Sterling *per Annum*, of our Money saved, which we lay out for Linnen Cloth purposely for that use, as may appear by examining this Charge by the former Rule.

It is altogether indisputable, that the frequent Transportation of Wool from *Ireland* into Foreign Parts, is an occasion of the great decay of the Woollen Manufacture in this Kingdom, and the Impoverishment (if not Ruine) of many Thousand Families, which were heretofore employed in the same.

And although the former good Laws, Statutes, and Provisions which have been framed to prevent so great and impendent a mischief, have not produced that good effect that was thereby intended, but that abundance of Wool is still convey'd to Foreign Parts from His Majesties Dominions, especially *Ireland*; and that they who have made inspection into the Practice of *Irish* Traders, do find, that of so prodigious a quantity of Wool as goes by Shipping from thence, (which is near Four times as much as formerly) above the Moiety of it hath been convey'd to Foreign Parts; which Grievance, if continued, must of necessity speedily and inevitably prejudice, if not destroy our Manufacture.

And upon Consideration what should be the cause of so increasing a mischief, it appears, that fraudulent and evil-minded Persons, by Combination with, or negligence of several Customers, do frequently enter insolvent, or non-resident Securities for returning Certificates of their having Landed their Wool in *England*, and sometimes produce forged and false Certificates, to the deluding of the Judges, who cannot have time nor means to inspect into the same, as by several Proofs ready to be produced may appear: Besides by underhand Prosecution of their own Bonds, they produce no Proofs to the Judges, but such as shall lead (on pretence of Ship-wrack, cross Winds, or the like) to the discharge of their Bonds, and Judgment against His Majesty on the same, to the total deluding of the Law, and the encouragement of their licentious practices.

Now since it is contrary to the intent of Law, which obliges all persons to return Certificates of their having Landed the Wool in *England*, to make such forfeit for not doing so, who by misfortune, Ship-wrack, or Piracy, have lost their Goods at Sea: Therefore it is absolutely necessary, that great care be taken rightly to distinguish between such Persons as really, and such as only pretend to have received such damages, which the Judges can never do: For he that knows he shall offend, can soonest become Prosecutor, and so managing the cause himself against himself, can let the Judges have no other information, but such as may lead them to a Judgment against the King, and discharge of the delinquent, to the total dissolution of the Law.

Finally, if the care of our Ancestors hath been so great to Enact Laws for the Promotion, and encouragement of the Woollen Manufacture; if the advancement thereof be the support of the Glory, and Renown of our *English* Nation, and will prevent the Impoverishment, if not the fatal Ruine and inevitable Destruction of Thousands of Families that now are involv'd in Penury and Want: If it will advance the Price of Wool, and improve the Rate of Lands: If any, or all these things considered can prevail, it is presum'd (with submission) that this High Court will take some speedy Course for the Redress of so National a Grievance.

added to King
James's English
in 2 April 12. 1691

1666

Exposition of 1881